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Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) Statement at the Hearing on “The Impact of the Health Care Law on the Economy, Employers, and the Workforce”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for the hearing on “The Impact of the Health Care Law on the Economy, Employers, and the Workforce”.

Thank you Chairman Kline for calling this hearing.

There have been many predictions about how the new health care law would affect our nation’s economy. The debate has been heated. Misinformation about the law bred fear and division among the public. I hope we can put rhetoric and misinformation aside. We should openly and honestly examine the law that is now in effect, but still has several years to go before it is fully implemented.

The Affordable Care Act is not perfect. It does not contain everything that I wanted, and it includes things that some of my colleagues opposed. That is the nature of lawmaking.

But the new law has unquestionably begun to deliver positive results, for small businesses, large employers, individuals, children and families, and the elderly.

It has begun to work for small business.

Dr. Odette Cohen runs a small pediatrics practice in Willingboro, New Jersey. She testified at a recent hearing that the small business tax credit is keeping her employees covered.

Thanks to lower health care costs, Dr. Cohen is hiring another nurse practitioner and upgrading her business with an electronic recordkeeping system. And she said she’s eagerly awaiting the creation state-based health insurance exchanges in 2014, which will allow her to pool together with other small businesses to improve choices and drive down costs, just the way large companies do.

Dr. Cohen is not alone in benefiting from the new law. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that the number of small businesses offering insurance increased by 30 percent last year.

The new law works for large employers, too.

Helen Darling, president of the National Business Group on Health that represents more than 300 large employers including 65 of the Fortune 100, said that our nation's businesses would be worse off if the law is repealed.

The new law works for working people.

Workers are already enjoying new rights and protections that put them in charge of their own health care. Never again will they have to worry about losing health insurance if they lose or change their job or decide to start their own business.

The new law is literally keeping people alive.

More than a million young adults have been able to join their parent's health plan. Nearly 16 million Americans are no longer vulnerable to an insurance company dropping them from coverage when they need it most – when they get sick. And, 165 million people are no longer subject to annual or lifetime benefit caps.

Children with pre-existing conditions can no longer be denied coverage, and in 2014, the same will be true for adults.

And the new law also works for our overall economy.

Since President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, 1.1 million private sector jobs have been created – more than the entire eight years of the Bush administration.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that the IPO market is gaining momentum. Seven of the eleven companies going public last week were in health care related industries.

The Affordable Care Act is now the law of the land. It is working. It reins in the power insurance companies have unfairly wielded over ordinary Americans' lives.

If Congress were to repeal this law, small businesses, families with children, workers, and the elderly would be harmed immediately. Their taxes would go up, new rights and benefits overturned, and their access to quality, affordable health care taken away.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to today's hearing and I yield back my time.

<http://democrats.edworkforce.house.gov>